

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH OF ST. LEONARD,
SHOREDITCH,

On Sunday, December 4, 1796,

IN THE AFTERNOON.

BY THE

REV. GEORGE PATTRICK, LL. B.

CHAPLAIN TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY BACCH,
OF LEE, IN KENT;

ON ENTERING ON THE OFFICE OF ONE OF THE FIRST
LECTURERS OF THE PARISH OF ST. LEONARD.

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LONDON

TO THE
WORTHY INHABITANTS
OF THE
PARISH OF ST. LEONARD, SHOREDITCH.

GENTLEMEN;

WHEN I was returned as your Lecturer, early in the spring, by the suffrage of near a thousand electors, and a majority of near six hundred, I was flattered with the preference given me ; but felt no joy in the event, from the peculiarity of the predicament I then stood in.

I knew that without the Vicar's sanction I could not be established—and, without his countenance, I could not have been comfortable in the exercise of my ministry in his parish.

It might be thought, by some, humbling and mortifying to be curtailed in the enjoyment of a privilege that might have been reasonably looked for, from so decided a sense of the majority of the parish.

But, in a parish so large, it is not to be wondered at, that a considerable number of persons, attached to *their* friend, should have an interest to espouse likewise ; and it was natural an Incumbent, who makes peace his wish, should endeavour to establish peace amongst all contending parties in his parish.

The well-judged arrangement made for bringing in *Joint-Lecturers* on a new election, seemed, to the Vicar, the means most likely to produce the end he sought.

The expedient has rendered both parties triumphant, and consequently happy.

I confess myself far happier in the *joint*, than I should have been in *a sole* lectureship, whilst the parishioners were divided and at variance among themselves ; the coming amongst you with general sanction and consent of all parties, making my new appointment highly gratifying to me.

As various circumstances rendered it inconvenient, or even impracticable to preach a probation sermon, it struck me as a proper thing, in my first address from the pulpit, to express to you how well aware I am, that the charge before me is extensive and important.

I have, so far as I thought I might with propriety do it from the pulpit, hinted at the truly liberal and respectful treatment I have met with from my supporters. The sparing me an humiliating and degrading canvass, or personal application to solicit the favour of individuals, and making your election a voluntary and unrequested act, has laid me under an obligation not to be forgotten. This not only furnishes a proof of your liberality and respect to my professional character, as a Clergyman ; but renders my call so clear and satisfactory, that I am not left to doubt as to the providence of God herein—or hesitate,

tate, for a moment, as to the propriety of embracing the charge it calls me to : and I must also add, it intitles you to my warmest acknowledgments and affections.

The Sermon, preceded by these observations, comprises nothing new or interesting ; yet, as I am not conscious it contains any thing that can have the least tendency to offend, I am the more willing to comply with the strenuous solicitation that has been made me to print it. My friends, who have borne the whole burden, both of expence and trouble, in this business, seem to have on this ground a claim, which (as they are pleased to urge it) I cannot well resist ; and, therefore, from the sole motive of gratitude to them, I have yielded to their request.

If any thing is calculated in the Sermon to excite disgust, it is the frequent use of the *first person singular* ;—but, as I have on this occasion put myself in the place of a *Respondent*, it could not be avoided : and as it is the first, so I hope it will be the last time I shall have occasion, in your pulpit, to say so much upon so unworthy a subject as myself.

I hope the parishioners of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, for whom it was constructed as the opening of my commission amongst them, and for whose perusal only it is printed, will accept this Sermon as a token of my affection and respect, and read it with that candour and allowance, a man whose name has never appeared in print before, may be reasonably expected to stand in need of.

I earnestly

I earnestly request, that the unanimous voice that (under God, and the sanction of those that have authority amongst you) have constituted Mr. Ellis and myself Joint-Lecturers of your parish, may henceforth be lifted up in prayer for a blessing upon our ministry ; and that we may be made, through grace, faithful witnesses for our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, and instruments of furthering your best and eternal interests.

I am, GENTLEMEN,

With unfeigned gratitude and respect,

Your obliged and affectionate Servant
in the Gospel,

GEORGE PATTRICK.

No. 6, Wilderness-Row, Goswell-Street.

December 13, 1796.

S E R M O N.

MATTHEW, xxvi. 50.

Wherefore art thou come?

WITH fear and trembling, in much weakness, —but with thankfulness to God, and gratitude to this congregation, I stand before you this day as a Minister. God support me with his powerful hand, and cause the event to praise him for the work that he hath wrought!

It was natural (on being told, that after many seemingly adverse providences, I was yet to stand before you in this place as a Lecturer) I should deliberate as to the manner, and the subject of my first addressing you.

The words of the text first suggested themselves to my mind, without considering their connection. But when I recollected, and found they were the words of Jesus Christ to Judas the traitor, on coming to betray his master with a kiss—my heart recoiled at the idea, and I was for laying them aside, with the spirit of an Hazei, “Is thy servant a dog, that he should”
need

need such an inquiry as this?—But I considered the thing again, and am persuaded, that though we do not like to be addressed and treated as traitors by other people, it is very salutary for a man to suspect and search himself; both as to the views with which he makes any profession of religion at all, or engages in any particular ministrations of it.

And every church or congregation exhibits its wisdom, in a jealous scrutiny, as to the authority and the motives, of every messenger that comes with tidings to it; “*because* many false prophets are gone into the world,*” and Judas still lurks in many of our breasts, under the coverture of discipleship with Christ. Try you, therefore, *the spirits, whether they be of God.* Yea, *let a man examine himself.* And, Lord, help me now to take up David’s prayer, and say, in the presence of this great congregation, *Search † me, O God! and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

In the farther prosecution of my subject, I intend to put the words of the text into the mouths of several, who have a right to make the inquiry the text expresses—an inquiry, both as to the warrant and authority *with* which, and likewise the commission or errand *on* which I come. May the Lord enable me to answer them as in the presence not of many hearers only, but as in the presence of that God who searcheth the heart!

* 1. John, iv. 1.

† Psa. cxxxix. 23, 24.

I. Methinks I hear them first in the mouth of Christ. They penetrate my soul ! They make me tremble ! They humble me in the dust ; when I consider who and what Judas Iscariot, the object of this inquiry, was ;—A great professor ! A selected friend ! An associate with the pure and holy Jesus ! A powerful preacher ! A caster-out of devils ! A worker of great and many wonderful works by the power of the name of Jesus !—*Yea * mine own familiar friend* (as the character is foretold and drawn by prophetic David), *mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me.*

It is awful, very awful, after knowledge, intimacy, seeming nearness, and familiarity with Christ, to fall from all this high-standing, into the extreme depths of misery and darkness !

How it was that Judas fell, is not my subject for to-day : I shall only say that love of money, love of ease, love of the world, and love of pleasure, led to the betraying Christ. *Take heed, O my soul ! how thou standest, lest thou fall.*

But the question still sounds in my ears from the mouth of Jesus Christ, Wherefore art thou come ? Art thou come to betray me ? I dare return none but Ezekiel's † answer in the vision of dry bones—*“ Lord, thou knowest.”*

However, the question still presses for reply. And, first, as to the *authority* and *warrant* by which I come ; I trust I may answer the inquiring Jesus,

* Psal. xli. 9.

† Ezek. xxxvii. 3.

“ Because thou, Lord, didst call : ” — “ *thou knowest*
 “ I have neither asked this thing of God or man ;
 “ and that I have said in my soul, before thee, with
 “ far more cause than Moses, ‘ O my * Lord ! I am
 “ not eloquent,’ — I am of uncircumcised †, (or, with
 “ Isaiah, of) unclean ‡ lips : — *thou knowest*, that I
 “ have adopted Jeremiah’s language, ‘ Ab §, Lord
 “ God, behold I cannot speak, for I am a child.’ But
 “ yet thou calledst me with a voice so powerful,
 “ and overruled with a hand so victorious, as to
 “ bear down all obstacles, both within me, and
 “ without me, and hast set an open door before me.”
 Lord, grant me then the *signs* || following, that thou
 hast sent me, viz. a message sealed with power to
 the consciences of men !.

Respecting *what I am to do* : I am not come to
 vow faithfulness, like Peter ; but to pray for it, as a
 poor, weak, unstable creature, that knows he can-
 not stand a moment longer than thou shalt uphold
 him—to implore that grace by which alone he can
 be kept from betraying thee *for thirty pieces of*
silver.

2. As to the *work before me*—Thy commission is
 to preach ¶ the Gospel to every creature ; to feed ** thy
 sheep ; to bear †† thy name among Gentile sinners :

Thou hast said unto thy prophets, If thou ‡‡ take
 forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my
 mouth :

* Exod. iv. 10.

§ Jer. i. 6.

** John, xxi. 16.

† Exod. vi. 30.

|| Mark, xvi. 20.

†† Acts, ix. 15.

‡ Isa. vi. 5.

¶ Mark, xvi. 15.

‡‡ Jer. xv. 19.

Thou

Thou ¶ hast *breathed on thy disciples, and said unto them, Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained:*

Thou hast *given to them the ministry of reconciliation**; committed to them the word thereof, and made them *ambassadors for thee*, to distant, vile, rebellious sinners, to bring them home to God.

Lord, who is sufficient for these things? I dare not say, *I come thus to do thy will, O God!*—but I come praying for the needed and the promised grace; *thou hast said*, “My grace† is sufficient for thee;”—“Lo! I am‡ with you alway, to the end of the world.”

II. But the inquiry is reasonably to be expected from the mouth of men: and, first, from the ministers of this church; to whom I would answer—Besides the call of Providence, already stated, I come with episcopal authority and licence, grounded on the warrant, confirmation, and approbation of the proper pastor of, and the countenance of his immediate representative in, this parish:

And I come, reverend brethren, to take part of *this ministry§, from which* the unhappy subject of our text *by transgression fell.*

I come to join you in bearing testimony to *the glorious || Gospel of the blessed God:*

To join you in espousing the doctrines maintained in the liturgies, articles, and homilies of our excel-

¶ John, xx. 22, 23. * 2 Cor. v. 18, 19.

† 2 Cor. xii. 9.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 20 § Acts, i. 25.

|| 1 Tim. i. 11.

lent establishment ; and in recommending it to our hearers, to contend for that faith, and pursue those glorious objects our establishment regards :

To join you in that office and ministration, respecting which we have solemnly declared, in the face of God and man, that “ we believe * ourselves inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, and think ourselves truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the discharge of.” I come to receive encouragements from your love ; example from your zeal and tender care for souls ; admonition from “ your † wisely framing your lives and the lives of your families according to the doctrine of Christ,” as far as divine grace has enabled you, or shall enable you to discharge, and exhibit such evangelical dispositions and affections in your *own* habits, to quicken and increase the same in *mine* :

And that we may, as fellow-labourers, use holy emulation in faithful preaching and godly living, to stir up, to provoke one another to love and good works.

I promise nothing on this behalf, but in the safe and guarded accents of our Ordination Service—I am come *so to do*, the Lord being my helper.

III. If the people, the parishioners at large, inquire—Wherefore art thou come ? I think I may answer them, in addition to the authorities already mentioned—I am come, upon the *warrant* of *your call*.

* Ordination Service.

† Ibid.

Under God, and through the sanction of the under-shepherd, to whom your souls are primarily committed, *you* have been the instruments of bringing me here.

The energy, perseverance, and union of that great body of parishioners that have elected me—without any solicitation, canvass, trouble, or expence on my part, has been both the prevailing consideration that has made me willing, and even desirous to engage in this work ; and given me a confidence that God will bless me in it.

My office, or commission on which I am sent, is the ministry of the Gospel, whereof the Apostle thus speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 1, 2. *“Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not. But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”*

Whence, as a minister of Jesus Christ, I hope,

1. I am come to put away all artifice and dissimulation, and to speak always freely and sincerely as in the presence of God, seeking only to make manifest the truth in the consciences of men ; not aiming at exalting my own authority, or extending my own reputation ; but, renouncing all such views and motives, to preach Jesus Christ as the supreme Lord of his church : and instead of setting up myself as a master, or a pattern, declare myself to be your ser-

want for the sake of Jesus ;^{*} and desirous, from a sense of love to you, and duty to him, to *be* all things, so far as I *may*, and to *do* all things so far as I *can*, to forward and promote your most important interests.

2. I hope in coming to you, I may be enabled to say, as the apostle Paul did * “ *I am determined to know nothing amongst you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*” And O! what a fund—what a rich magazine have I here to disclose to you, when I bear testimony to Christ as God, and to Christ as God-man—Emanuel—*God with us!*—and herein, the dignity of his person ; the sovereignty of his will ; the wisdom and stability of his counsels ; the immutability of his covenant ; the eternity and unchangeableness of his love ; the freedom of his grace ; the suitableness of his salvation ; the preciousness of his blood ; the sufficiency of his atonement ; the completeness, as well as necessity, of his obedience and righteousness to justify believing sinners ; and the efficacy of his sanctifying and renewing Spirit to work in them that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

These are some out of many things pertaining to Jesus Christ, of which, by the help of his grace, I am to bear a testimony to the parishioners of St. Leonard.

And while I live upon this earth, may these things of Christ be shewn me by the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, and be the never ceasing theme that employs my tongue!

* 1 Cor. ii. 2.

3. Another

3. Another design on which, I hope, I am come, is to deal honestly and faithfully with you : neither to flatter nor to censure, nor comfort nor condemn, without a warrant from the word : *to the law* * *and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word,* it is because they have no light in them; and such cannot be as *God's mouth*†. I am come then to tell you, however amiable any amongst you may be—exemplary—famed for works—revered for character—looked up to as patterns and examples—there is no salvation, no pardon, no atonement, no justifying plea, no access to God, no heaven, eternal happiness, or glory, but only *in and through Jesus*.

The man lives not, that sins not. And to say nothing of that *original* or *birth-sin*, that, according to God's word (and the articles of our church) entails eternal death on every man ‡ that is born into the world—the *actual* sin—the *every* sin—the *least* sin, (if any sin against an infinite God can be deemed little) that a man commits, constitutes him an heir of wrath : and consequently the soul that hath ever sinned, hath forfeited the life of the soul; is really and actually dead in a spiritual sense; hath lost all title to the kingdom of heaven; and shall never enter there, if the word of God be true, but by *Jesus*.

“There is no other name.” If you will not come unto him, there is no rest—no forgiveness—no peace

* Isa. viii. 20. † Jer. xv. 19. ‡ Article ix.

—no real life. “ *This † is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.* Nay, here are our Lord’s own words in proof of this: John, iii. 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

4. And if I come as a faithful witness, I must affirm, that faith is the channel through which this *eternal life*, and all the blessings of it are conveyed into the experience of them that possess it. And this faith, called the *faith of God’s elect*, is not wrought in any, but by the operation and gift of God’s own Spirit;—that quickening and life-giving power, whose influences and inspiration our church so constantly implores, to enlighten and cleanse our hearts: and without which, no man can see, believe, or know him that is the way, the truth, and the life. *No man* can say that Jesus is the Christ, but by the Holy Ghost.*

And lastly on this head, in answer to the inquiry of the text, I come to glorify God, to humble self, to win souls, to seek Christ’s honour, not my own.—Do I?—Ah, my soul!—say I *ought*: for these are the true motives with which any, and every minister ought to come to a people. But truly when I look into my heart, (conscious as I am that my leading motives have a regard to these important objects, yet) I see such

† 1 John, v. 11, 12.

* 1 Cor. xii. 3.

a mixture therein—so much of self, the creature, and the flesh, I *dare not say* what my motives are. God purge them for their impure and unwarrantable mixtures!—pull down the idol, self! Take thou my heart, set up thy throne there, and make me (for no power but thine can do it) obedient to the faith, and a faithful, humble, and affectionate messenger of peace; the peace that passeth all understanding, to this people!

IV. But there are particular characters, or orders of people, that may take up the inquiry of the text; and from the respect I wish to pay them, I put it first into the mouths of my superiors, whether it be in age, or wealth, or situation, or standing in life;—if any of them shall say, “Wherefore art thou come?” I hope I am come with a disposition to *give honour* to whom honour is due*; but at the same time to remind them there are greater honours, better things, more durable riches, and more substantial blessings to be obtained than this world can furnish. “*Let† not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, neither let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.* Where the knowledge of a God in Christ is *not*, and where Christ is *not* the portion of the heart, the whole world will profit nothing.

* Rom. xiii, 17. † Jer. ix, 23, 24.

But, while I shall endeavour to speak respectfully and faithfully, let me speak encouragingly to my superiors amongst you ; for though the rich and affluent have “ good things here,” they are not, on *this account*, excluded from spiritual and heavenly blessings ; and therefore I come not only to tell you that oft-told truth, “ riches are a snare”—“ the root of evil ;”—that they have a tendency to destroy, rather than save the soul ; all this is true, and those that *trust* in uncertain riches *must* eventually perish ;—but I have authority to tell you, that grace can sanctify even *wealth*. Rich *men* are instanced in the Gospel, and many honourable *women* too, who ministered to Jesus Christ of their substance, and made friends to themselves of the mammon of unrighteousness. And in every age and period of the Gospel there have been, and there still are, many such :—God grant that many such instances may be found here ! There is no condition in life that renders any man an exempt from the saving grace of God, if made willing, in the day of his power, to embrace the Gospel-call.

2. But, perhaps, when I look down upon the broad aisles of this noble building, I see more of the poor than the rich to speak to :—Welcome this part of my charge ! I willingly attend to your inquiry, “ Wherefore art thou come ?”—I am come, as God shall help me, to preach the Gospel to you ; to shew you some of your best *privileges* ; to establish some of your noblest *rights* ; to reconcile you (as far as the arguments of a poor fallen creature can, from time to time

time in his ministry) to your situation; to shew you, that though you think yourselves destitute, you have, if you are believers on the Son of God, more durable and sterling riches than all the Indies can produce—"the poor are rich in faith." Your privileges are greater than even *ungodly* monarchs can pretend to; for you, as the receivers of the Gospel, are the sons of God, and heirs of a kingdom that never can be shaken. Your eternal *rights* are, to eat of the tree of life; to call God your father, Christ your brother; take hands and holy fellowship with *all* the inhabitants of heaven, *the general assembly of the first-born*, and all *the spirits of the just made perfect*. O! what a glorious equality there shall be in the kingdom of heaven! There is no respect of persons with God; and the *beggar* here, if a beggar for grace, shall be lifted up to share the Redeemer's throne.

But let me be faithful. You must be poor in spirit; poor in your own judgment; poor in a Gospel sense:—for with bodily poverty sometimes a proud and lofty spirit dwells; and in the most abject, outward circumstances some have rebellious hearts, that must be penetrated and softened by grace, before the heavenly inheritance is theirs.

3. My friends;—those that have been particularly and partially so, in bringing me forward here, are you inquiring?—I must answer you in the wise accents of a wicked man, "*Lo! * now I am come unto you, have I*

* Num. xxii. 38.

now any power at all to say any thing, save the word God putteth in my mouth ?

If I prove worthy of your kind exertions, I shall not flatter, but reprove your vices. You know what the Psalmist says, "*Let the righteous * smite me, it shall be a kindness :—and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head.*" I must not "*heal the † hurt of the daughter of my people slightly ;*" but, like a skilful surgeon (if God gives me ability to do so), search the wound, before the balm of the Gospel is applied.

Let me come then, and may grace enable me ! to return your friendly labours and endeavours to place me here, not merely with empty and unmeaning thanks, but with honest truths, labours, prayers, watchfulness, and tears for the care and welfare of such of your souls, as shall open their sorrows and their fores to me.

And O ! what a rich return shall you receive, if, through the instrumentality of my poor administrations, the cup of salvation shall indeed be tendered, and the blessed hope of eternal life be given, to such of you as shall put yourselves within the sphere and influence of my teaching, with the *Holy Spirit's* power attending the feeble effort.

4. But now—as for mine enemies :—I am not conscious of having made *one* by any overt-act of mine ;

* *Psa.* cxli. 5.

† *Jer.* viii. 11.

yet, in an assembly of some thousands, it may be that there are some that have at least withheld their countenance, from the warrantable motives of partiality to another, and from unacquaintedness with myself. I will put the question into their mouths, Wherefore art thou come?

Because the Lord hath overruled it so. Indeed I have come with backwardness and reluctance: and during the agitation of past events, I have often wished to withdraw; but God and honour forbade retreat. And now, at length (with few exceptions), I am come by general consent.

And as to the business, or errand, I am upon, it is with desires (desires that, I trust, will be seconded with *endeavours*), to conciliate your affections; to convince you, if any have hated or opposed, they have hated and opposed without a cause; to shew you that I love peace—will preach for peace—will pray for peace;—that I am desirous of being a messenger of usefulness, of comfort, of sympathy with you in all your afflictions; and, by a steady and uniform striving, to live down all your prejudices, to forget every unkindly impression made, and to traffic in the exercises of love amongst you.

And may that God, who is all-sufficient, help me in these intentions; and, through his blessing on my labours, make me, yea, and my brother Lecturer too (if it is his will), the means and instruments of your souls eternally rejoicing!

5. Bear with me yet a little longer, while I put the inquiry into the mouths of daring guilty sinners, if there be such amongst you. They may be supposed to say, "Wherefore art thou come—to torment us before the time? Art thou come to alarm our fears; to disquiet our feasts; to terrify our souls; to open the mouth of the pit, and level all the artillery of hell upon our poor unhallowed heads?" No, no, poor sinners, not altogether so: seasonable alarms and wholesome terrors may sometimes be needful; for the soul that lives and dies in unbelief, impenitency, and guilt unpardoned by the blood of the Lamb, must miscarry everlastingly. But for this time, at least, I touch a softer string: sweet mercy, the darling attribute of heaven, is my theme;—I come to bring you good tidings of great joy: pardon, pardon for the guilty; reconciliation with God for rebels, through the merits and death of that Jesus that died, "*suffering the just for the unjust*," to bring sinners unto God; who died to make an atonement for their transgressions, and to seal their peace with his blood!—I come to bring you gifts of love, overtures of grace, and promises of glory for the greatest sinner here, that is now made willing to come unto God through Jesus Christ.

Come then, sinners, come see the true character of God—that God whom you have blasphemed—the God whom you have hated; come see him as a God, *forgiving sin through the mediation of his Son*.—This is a point of view, in which the vilest may look
 God

God in the face, and not die.—Come then, fellow-sinners, come and taste of his graciousness, who says, “I came not to call righteous persons, but sinners, to repentance.”

Sinner, believing sinner, whoever thou art, he says to thee, “*I have * blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sin; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.*”—God pour the comfort of such a word as this into the heart of every conscious mourning sinner before me this day!

6. But *are* there mourning sinners here?—self-condemned, contrite, sorrowing, penitent believers? And are they anxious to know what my errand is to them? Let me refer them to the beginning of Isa. lxi. where Jesus says, “I am anointed” (and every Minister that comes in the grace, the name, and the power of Jesus Christ, may say the same in a measure); “*the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening the prison to them that are bound; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.*”

7. Should any here resemble these *trees well planted*, i. e. men saved by grace, and producing the fruits of

* Isa. xlv. 22.

salvation to the glory of God ;—I say, are there confirmed and established believers here, inquiring, “ Wherefore art thou come ? ” Why, under God, I suppose, “ because you have prayed for me. ” And all I can come with to you is, the “ recommending you still to keep the good old way. ”—One thing let me remind you of, with a view to *my* being a gainer by you : as Apollos, through the expoundings of Aquila and Priscilla to him *more perfectly the way of God*, whilst sojourning with them, was made an instrument of *helping them much who had believed through grace* * ; so (though I have not the eloquence of Apollos, nor his might in the Scriptures) may my coming in and out amongst you be, to the furthering my own knowledge and understanding of the things of God, and the mutual edification and comfort of both you and me !

In the mean time, I can only repeat the thing I have hinted, Go on ;—and God help you to do so ! Go on, believing still on Jesus Christ ; still building upon that tried stone ; still trusting the sufficiency of the Redeemer’s work ; still living upon him, and receiving † out of his fulness, from day to day ; and enjoying him in all his covenant relations and engagements, in a more increased communion *with* him, and in a more growing likeness *to* him. And, if you have ever prayed for the poor unworthy Minister now

* Acts, xviii. 24, 28. † John, i. 16.

before you, pray still. He needs prayer more than ever ; that, being come amongst you, he may not come in vain : nor can any of you expect a blessing on your pastors, or even pastors at all after God's own heart, without a diligent seeking them at a throne of grace.

And now, in conclusion, let *me* take the question of the text into my own mouth, and address it to this congregation—Wherefore are you come to St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, this afternoon ? Is it to see a reed shaken with the wind ? To hear the words of a man ? To gratify curiosity on the opening of a ministry ? To depress the Minister with an aspect of discouragement—or lift him up with vain and undeserved commendation ? These are poor motives, existing in the breasts of some ; but I hope better things of many amongst you.

You will, however, now and at all times, do well, all of you, to search your hearts, as to the motives with which you attend on the preaching of the word, and those that minister therein. For the hearers of the Gospel are as liable to betray Christ (if his upholding grace is wanting) as the preachers of it : *take heed, therefore, how ye hear.*

There is one striking idea St. Paul gives of Ministers, in the second chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians, and the fifteenth and sixteenth verses, with which I conclude : “ *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one, we are the savour of death*

unto death—and to the other, the savour of life unto life.

God grant that many amongst you may bear witness to this latter truth ; and find the word, through grace, made powerful in your experience as individuals ! May you see the Lord adding to his church daily such as shall be saved ; and find yourselves, by genuine Scripture marks, amongst the happy number !

God grant an answer of grace and peace to this supplication, for his mercies sake in that Jesus, to whom, with God the Father, and God the eternal Spirit, be ascribed equal and endless praise and glory.
Amen.



FINIS

